

JOHN MCQUEEN HOUSE
(Queensdale)
U.S. Highway 80
Burkville vicinity
Lowndes County
Alabama

HABS No. A1-887

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Southeast Region
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JOHN MCQUEEN HOUSE (Queensdale) HABS NO. AL-887

Location: 1.0 km north of U. S.. Highway 80 on a dirt road approximately 1.7 km mile west of Highway 37 in Lowndes County, Alabama.

Present Owner: General Electric - Montgomery Project
Lowndes County Road 40, Route 1, Box 9-D
Burkville, Alabama 36725

Present Occupant: The McQueen house burned in the ca 1970 and the site was abandoned.

Significance: The John McQueen House was the center of a large antebellum plantation located in northeast Lowndes County. The McQueen family originally settled the site in the 1820s and were prominent planters. Although the house is no longer extant, the site provides information important to the understanding of the evolution of Alabama "Black Belt" plantation complexes.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1830. John McQueen Jr. acquired this land from a U. S. patent in 1825. The 1830 census lists McQueen as occupying the site with his large family. Descendants of the McQueen family state that the house was built around 1830 and it resembled the nearby Young-Nall house in appearance.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The chain of ownership for all properties in the Burkville Multiple Resource Area is incomplete due to incomplete county records. The following is the most complete chronological progression possible according to identifiable deed and will records. Reference is to the Clerk's office in the Lowndes County Courthouse in Hayneville, Alabama.

- 1825 Land Patent 1788, Volume 6, page 393, recorded April 16, 1825.
Original land patent given to John McQueen Jr. for eighty acres containing the McQueen house site.
- 1869 Deed November 16, 1869, Book F, page 630
James D. McQueen
to
John P. McQueen and Benjamin F. McQueen
- 1876 Deed January 20, 1876, Book K, page 22
Benjamin McQueen
to
Julia A. McQueen
- 1910 Will November 5, 1910, Book 8, page 150
Julia McQueen
to
B. H. McQueen
- 1943 Will May 6, 1943, Book BK, page 20
B. H. McQueen
to
wife and various heirs
- 1958 Deed Book QQ, page 598
Wife and heirs
to
Ben White

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown
5. Original plans and construction: None located.

B. Historical Context:

The McQueen family was one of the most prominent families of 19th century Lowndes County. In 1825 John McQueen Jr. of South Carolina received a land patent to eighty acres in Lowndes County and he and his family moved to Alabama shortly after. Within a few years McQueen's land holdings increased and he became a prosperous cotton planter and owned many slaves. Around 1830 McQueen built a large frame home known as "Queensdale" which was located on a hill near the western boundary of McQueen's property. The McQueens continued to own the land and occupy the house until the mid-20th century.

John McQueen Jr. was one of the largest landowners in the county during the early 19th century with property totalling 1,800 acres upon his death. McQueen had nine children and several of them built smaller homes on the plantation. Many members of the McQueen family are

listed as residing in this section of Lowndes County from 1830 to 1860. The 1855 census shows that the McQueen family owned 142 slaves and cultivated large quantities of corn and cotton. The family also raised cattle, pigs and sheep. When John McQueen died in 1859 all of his property and slaves were divided among his children.

Unlike many families in the area, the McQueen family remained relatively prosperous after the Civil War. The house and lands eventually passed into the hands of Benjamin McQueen who farmed the land utilizing the tenant system. Several frame houses associated with tenant farmers remain extant on land near the Queensdale house site. Benjamin McQueen's son, B. Harris McQueen, received the property in 1910 which consisted of 924 acres. The production of cotton was eventually phased out and the land used for pasture. Queensdale continued to be occupied by the McQueen family until the 1950s when it was sold and the house abandoned. The house was unoccupied when it burned ca. 1970. Foundations of the house are visible at the site and the McQueen family cemetery and various outbuildings remain extant nearby.

The McQueen family cemetery is a significant component of the McQueen house site. The cemetery is located northwest of the house site and contains six marked graves. Interred in the cemetery are John McQueen Jr., Benjamin F. McQueen and various other family members. The use of the cemetery is recorded between 1834 and 1878. The cemetery has been abandoned for the past several decades and is in great disrepair.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This structure no longer exists, having burned ca. 1970, and no visual evidence has been located.

B. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The original site of the house is now a large clearing.
2. Historic landscape design: No elements of a significant historic landscape design exist.
3. Outbuildings: A servant's house is located to the southeast of the main house site and the family cemetery is located to the west of the site. Further to the southeast is a surviving tenant house, the McCary House.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings: None located.

B. Early Views: None located.

C. Interviews:

McQueen, Mrs. John P. Montgomery, Alabama. August 19, 1983.

Shreiner, Mrs. Charles. Burkville, Alabama. August 19, 1983.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Alabama State Census 1855. State Library and Archives, Montgomery, Alabama.

"Lowndes County Cemetery Records". Undated manuscript on file, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

Lowndes County Deed, Inventory, Minute and Will Records, 1830-1983. Lowndes County Courthouse, Hayneville, Alabama.

"Lowndes County Historical Society Newsletter", Vol. 8-10. Ft. Deposit, Alabama: Private Printing, 1975-1977.

United States Census Records. 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860.

E. Supplemental Material: Additional historical/genealogical information on file with The Ehrenkrantz Group/Building Conservation Technology, Inc., Nashville, Tennessee.

Prepared by: Michael Emrick, Historical Architect and Philip Thomason, Architectural Historian
The Ehrenkrantz Group/Building Conservation Technology, Inc.
August - September 1983

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This recording project was conducted by The Ehrenkrantz Group/ Building Conservation Technology, Inc., of Nashville, Tennessee under contract from Environmental Research and Technology, Inc. for General Electric - Montgomery Project, Burkville, Alabama.

Project personnel included Michael Emrick, Project Architect (project coordination, architectural data); James Thompson, Architect (measured drawings and sketch plans); Philip Thomason, project historian; and Barry Starkey, photographer. Agency involvement included the Mobile District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Southeast Regional Office of the National Park Service.